

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

Annual Report to the Institution for 2020

In accordance with clause 2.1.10[i] of the Code, the Summary of the AEC's report to the institution is presented:

This report has been approved by the full Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) following review at its meeting on 25th February 2021.

In addition to presenting a summary of statutory reporting data, this report notes the following outcomes and activities:

- Meetings of the AEC and Subcommittee were held by video from March 2020 onwards due to movement restrictions resulting from the COVID pandemic.
- Despite COVID restrictions, the AEC maintained its schedule of announced and unannounced inspections of the University's animal facilities. The inspection party included independent external members. No significant concerns were raised during these inspections.
- The Animal Welfare Officer continued to provide direct oversight of animal research activities.
- As with much other research activity, much animal-based research was unable to commence due to COVID restrictions. This affected both field work and studies in University animal facilities.
- The AEC recommended that the University support an openness agreement along the lines of the UK Concordat on Openness on Animal Research if a similar initiative is developed in Australia.
- Since all the AEC's Category A (veterinarian) members are external to the institution, the average attendance by external members comprised two thirds of those present.
- 92% of studies were deemed to have low animal welfare impact, and 55% of studies were directed towards environmental or conservation research.
- In response to a recommendation from the NSW Animal Research Review Panel, a new section has been added to the report to summarise high impact studies (DPI Procedure Code Categories 7 and 8). As has been the case for several years, the AEC neither received nor approved applications to conduct projects involving 'death as an endpoint' (Category 8). A brief summary is provided of studies involving major physiological challenge (Category 7).